

# MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

ISSUE 85

APRIL 2014



*The only UK magazine dedicated to  
vintage coin-operated amusement machines*

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

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# Editorial

Hello, and welcome to the April issue – which hasn't happened quite as quickly as I had hoped. As if I haven't enough to contend with at the moment, with the ongoing difficulties at Brighton, I've now had to buy a new computer – hence the delay. Literally a couple of days after posting out the March magazines, the computer suddenly developed an unhealthy dislike for doing what it was supposed to. Given that the computer was eight years old, my lovely wife eventually persuaded me that rather than spending money on its repair, it would be better to buy a new one – brilliant, more expense!

So I am now using a lovely new shiny computer that's about as user-friendly as a bike with no wheels. Windows 8? Who dreamt that up? Although, in fairness, I can just about put up with Windows, after all it's only an operating system (by the way, since when have programs been called 'apps')? What's not so easy to stomach is the new software I've had to buy. The new version of Coral totally clutters the screen with pointless widgets that I'll never use, and someone was either having a laugh or a nervous breakdown when they dreamt-up Office 2013 – what a box of bollocks!

It also came as a considerable shock to learn that Microsoft, in their infinite wisdom, scrubbed Outlook Express donkey's years ago. Why? What on earth was wrong with it? Better still, they haven't replaced it with anything, so I now have to receive emails via my browser. But here's the best bit, Microsoft also no longer supports Post Office Protocol, so unless you have a Gmail, yahoo or something else (that I can't remember) email address, then you can't receive emails – brilliant! Consequently, I've had to set up a Gmail address (that I didn't particularly want) in order to receive my Tiscali emails – double brilliant!

Anyway, rant almost over. However, I haven't yet been able to retrieve email addresses from my old computer, and currently have just seven in the new address book. So it would be really helpful if you could all email me, thus saving me the time in having to plough through reams of old subscription forms and typing in email addresses manually.

Well, that's just about it for now – hopefully, I'll be in a better mood next time!

All the best

*Jerry*

# Dreamland

## MARGATE

### Save Dreamland Update June 2014

#### DREAMLAND EXPO

Dreamland Expo - an interactive and immersive exhibition evoking the atmosphere of Dreamland, charting the revival of one of the UK's best loved amusement parks and looking forward to things to come - opened on Sunday 25th May 2014.

After two short introductions by Dreamland Trust Project Director Eddie Kemsley and Chairman Nick Laister, the ribbon was cut by the Trust's company secretary Susan Marsh. Then the crowds flooded into the former arcade building and had a taste of things to come, with elements from various rides that will be operating in Dreamland and a cinema showing archive film. Over 1,000 people walked through its doors and the atmosphere was electric.



As well as the pinball museum, face painting and Dreamland souvenir stall, Dreamland Remembered author Nick Evans was present at the event signing his new book Dreamland Revived (see advert on the next page for details of how to order), which updates his earlier title with over 40 new photos and brings the Dreamland story up to date. It is available at a discount price from Joyland Books.

On Bank Holiday Monday, The Arcade celebrated the 50th anniversary of Margate's infamous youth culture clash with an all-dayer and visitors had a chance to win Fred Perry's 'Margate on the Run' T-shirts. By the end of its first week, the Expo had been visited by over 5,000 people!

The Dreamland Expo opening was covered by ITV Meridian News and was filmed by the Isle of Thanet Gazette, viewable on YouTube. There is more information on the Dreamland Expo on the Dreamland Margate website and on the official Dreamland Facebook page.

So how was the Expo funded? The local community, Dreamland supporters and volunteers held a glittering celebrity art auction in the former Grade II\*-listed cinema amusement arcade last November to raise funds open a visitor centre in the lead up to Dreamland's Phase One opening in 2015.

Volunteers worked tirelessly to transform this space into an interactive and immersive exhibition evoking the atmosphere of Dreamland, charting the revival of one of the UK's best loved amusement parks and looking forward to things to come.

The exhibition is free entry and will be open every day from 10am until 5pm with occasional fund raising music events, film screenings, presentations and activities throughout the year.

***Nick Laister***

**Nick Laister** (Chairman, The Dreamland Trust)

**Jan Leandro** (Heritage and Engagement Officer, The Dreamland Trust)

[www.dreamlandmargate.com](http://www.dreamlandmargate.com)

[www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk)

**Photo:** Inside Dreamland Expo.



# **Dreamland Revived:**

## **The Story of Margate's famous amusement park**

**by Nick Evans**

Margate's Dreamland park opened in July 1920 and millions flocked to enjoy its attractions in the decades that followed. A visit to the Kent coast resort wasn't complete without a ride on the famed Scenic Railway, the Looping Star or the Dodgems.

Dreamland's trendsetting 1930s cinema led the way in design while the ballroom became famous for dancing and big name music concerts. Its restaurants fed the hordes descending on Margate for their beanfeast outings. Later on, Dreamland would hold its own as an exciting theme park.

The resort's decline in recent years has left its mark, leaving many yearning for a return to simpler times when ice cream, candy floss and kiss me quick hats made for heady days out at the seaside. Dreamland Revived contains a nostalgic collection of nearly 250 illustrations from its earliest days to the present plans for reopening as Britain's first heritage theme park.

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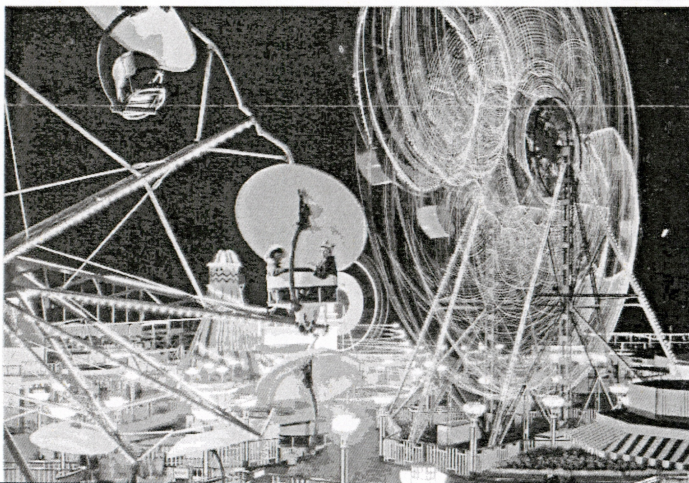
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# Dreamland Revived

The story of Margate's famous amusement park

by NICK EVANS



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# Old Penny Memories .....is back!!

By Stuart Dale

About four years ago we heard the sad new that the Old Penny Memories Museum in Bridlington was closing its doors for good due to the lease on the building running out. Well a few days ago quite out of the blue, I received an email from Chris the arcade owner telling me that he had managed to find some new premises and was now open for business once again. This could mean only one thing – a trip to Bridlington to checkout his new venture!





So last Saturday morning we loaded up the car and made the 85 mile journey, and for once the weather was on our side, as it was a nice sunny day. When we arrived in Bridlington it took us no time at all to find the new venue, in fact the new arcade is only around the corner from the old one. It is in the first unit by the side entrance to the 'Promenades Shopping Centre' and you can't miss it. The arcade has been up and running now for about five weeks and was already attracting a lot of regular customers. It is nice and bright inside having plate glass windows on two sides, and best of all, no steps, everything is on one level which is good for wheelchair access.

The arcade is fully manned when open, either Chris or one of his sons will be there to help you if you have any problems. Opening times are 10.30am to 4.30 pm but if you intend travelling a long way to enjoy this feast of vintage machines you can always give him a ring on 07742 658059 to double check the opening times.





Like me, Chris has a liking for the old electro-mechanical machines, so it comes as no surprise to find a good number of Jamieson's machines on display, after all they were all made in Bridlington just a mile or so up the road from the arcade. Also dotted around the walls you will see some of Oliver Whales allwins and as you come in the door there is a Whales Treasure Cave (elephant vendor) machine. This machine still has some of the original prizes pinned up inside. Chris told me that a few days before my visit he was approached by an elderly lady who had been inspecting the Treasure Cave with great interest. On speaking to her it turned out that she was none other than Oliver Whales' daughter-in-law Mary, and she was the person that pinned those very same prizes inside that very machine over 50 years before, how about that!











Another great machine is the nicely restored Balloons two player game, with its colourful artwork. The two players put one penny each into the machine, a fan starts to blow and a number of ping pong balls fly into the air and bounce erratically around the machine. The first player to catch five balls in their movable hopper wins his penny back. It is a very popular game, with lots of people playing it whilst we were there.

Other larger machines included Pinballs, a Big Shot shooting game, and a Cromptons pusher & Tooty Fruity. I remember seeing & playing on the rows of Tooty Fruity machines in the Scarborough arcades back in the 1960s.

There are far too many machines for me to list here, but needless to say there is something for everyone at the 'Old Penny Memories Arcade'. So why not have a day in Bridlington and check it out for yourself? I know I will be returning at some point, and you will always be made most welcome.

*Stuart Dale*





# Bryan's Variable Pressure Unit

By Richard Goddard

I have always been fascinated by mechanical items and especially the workings of old slot machines. One of the pleasures of playing any slot machine is the anticipation or hope of beating the machine to receiving a win. I wonder how many punters of those old allwin wall machines, following a win, used to believe that if they applied the same pressure by pulling the hammer lever down again to the exact same spot, their action would deliver the same force on the ball and hence the same end result - another win?

Some Oliver Whales and Wondermatics machines had a marked guide on the backplate of the hammer lever, perhaps in an attempt to lure the player into this belief and hence encourage them to feed more money into the machine; the player thus believing that they had some element of skill or control and hence predictability.

However, in order to eliminate the likelihood of predictability, William Bryan incorporated an ingenious variable pressure mechanism into many of his wall machines. This device would automatically adjust the hammer pressure each time the machine paid out, thereby alleviating another win if the player applied the same hammer pressure again (although in reality the possibility of an identical repeat ball trajectory was probably very slim). This feature appeared in his mechanisms during the mid 1950s and was in true William Bryan tradition, very inventive and creative.

The variable pressure is achieved via a cam on the rear of a ratchet wheel that when rotated, will alter the position of a vertically pivoting lever. This lever is attached at its foot to the hammer tension spring and at the top it presses against the cam. The lever is the primary reason for the relaxing or tightening of tension on the hammer spring.

I have sketched out a couple of diagrams of the main parts of the mechanism (other parts omitted for clarity) to show its action. When a win is achieved and the payout knob/wheel is rotated as in Diagram 1, the traditional long vertical arm activating the payout slide that had been the mainstay of allwin design for decades (A) is moved rather like a pendulum in a clock. William Bryan attached a small horizontal 'strut' to this long lever arm about two thirds up and when the lever arm is moved to the right this small strut acts as a pawl, engaging with the ratchet wheel and rotates it, hence the cam attached to the rear of the wheel will move around an elliptical arc.



The vertical lever (B), attached to the hammer tension spring, is hinged at its centre and owing to the spring tension pulling on the foot of the lever, the top of this lever pushes against the cam on the rear of the toothed wheel. Therefore, when the wheel is rotated during a win, the cam will either push the lever or slacken the levers pressure thus altering its position at the foot and hence the spring tension as in Diagram 2. Simple yet so effective, William Bryan was extremely mechanically inventive.

This variable pressure unit was fitted to most of Bryans allwins: the Pilwin, 5 Win, Elevenes, U Win, Gapwin and 10 Cup (photo 1 on following page) and must have been quite a sales attraction for arcade owners and showmen.

Diagram 1

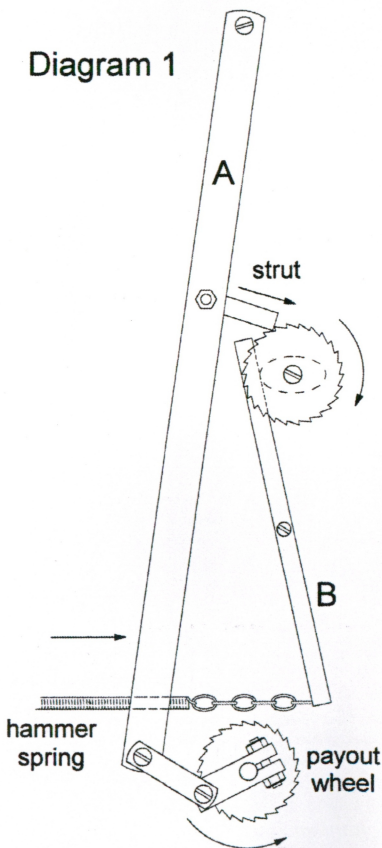
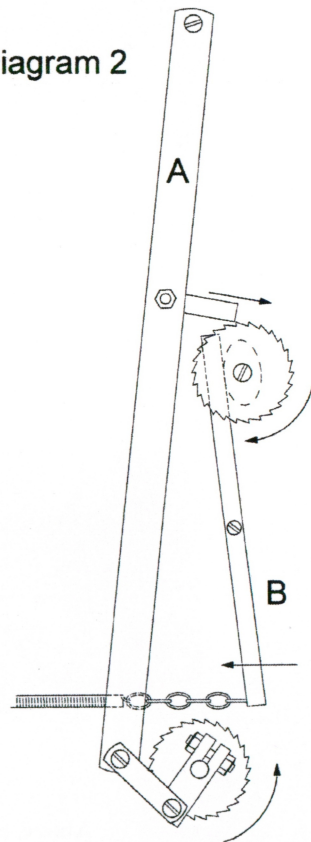
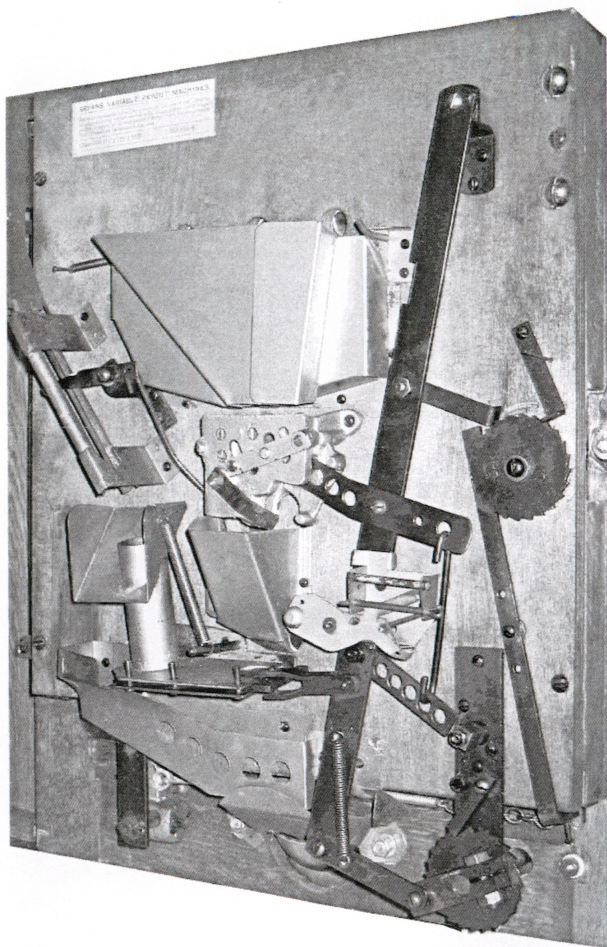


Diagram 2



I know of only one other manufacturer to adopt this VPU and that was Corteen for the 'Ruffler & Walker' machines (photo 2), almost certainly inspired by the Bryans VPU. Although activated in a slightly different way via a long rod that is moved up and down by way of a similar strut and ratchet wheel, the end result is the same: a variation in hammer tension thus reducing if not eliminating the player's element of control.

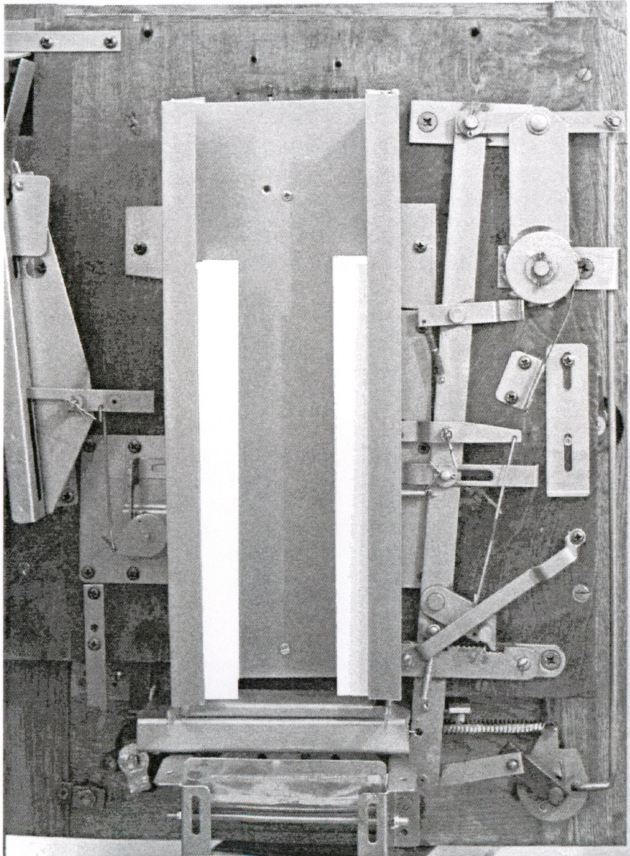


**Above, Bryans 10 Cup mechanism.  
Opposite page, Corteen 'sweetie' mechanism.**



As I have already mentioned, it can be said that this type of mechanism was not really necessary owing to the amount of variables in play when a ball is projected around the track. However, it is nevertheless interesting that William Bryan, an engineer of exactness, sought to bring concealed inexactness of play into his machines; very clever. This is what I find makes the hobby so interesting, the amount of impressive design ingenuity incorporated into some of these mechanical marvels of yesteryear.

*Richard Goddard*



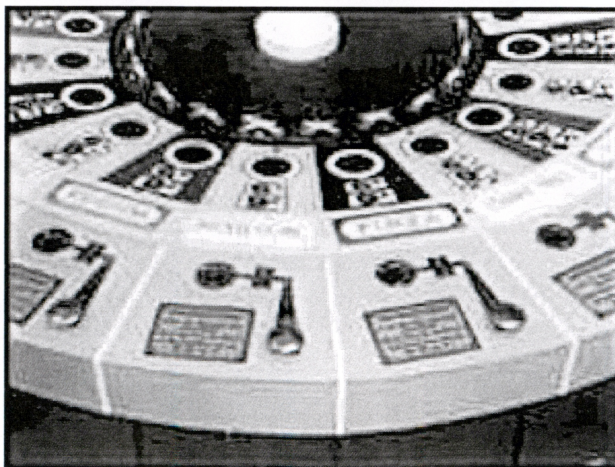
# More 1960s Memories

By Robert Rowland

This month's little memory is dated summer 1965, which was the first summer season that I started to trek around the local arcades after moving to Mablethorpe that same year. During the very busy summer months I got used to seeing a tramp walking pretty slowly around Marine Pastimes at various times each day. He was only looking for money because I never saw him insert a coin in any machine.

His main source of income was also used by me. The machine in question was the Cromptons 3d Derby Racer, a large twenty section round machine where you had the chance to win 6d, 9d or 12d if one of the award winning horses stopped on the section that you had bet on. Each section was named after a well-known racehorse, with names like Royal Tan, Pinza, ESB, Dante and many more.

The game play was as follows. When 'Play Now' was lit, you would insert your thru'penny bit in one of the sections, the twenty horses would all move in a clockwise direction and then stop. The 'Play Now' only lit for a few seconds and there were plenty of players who placed their bet too late. They would not realise that their bet had not registered and that their thru'penny bit had simply dropped down into the payout tray below.



*Cromptons 3d Derby Racer.*



On a busy day, people were in and out around this machine and on many occasions I spotted a returned coin in one of the payout trays, but before I could jump in another punter had stepped up to the machine and placed a bet. If his bet won, then you could kiss goodbye to that coin from the previous player. If he lost, then I would move in as quickly as I dared to take the coin that was still there in the payout tray.

And so to one particular day when this tramp saw a thru'penny bit in one of the payout trays. He sneaked into position and just stood there, at the same time covering the payout tray with his leg. He then pretended to insert a coin into the machine, although I could clearly see he had no coin in his hand. He just stood there looking around and then after a couple of minutes he slowly lowered his hand into the payout tray and got his thru'penny bit. He then stood there for a few more seconds before moving off.

On various occasions a friend and I saw this tramp heading towards Derby Day, and on quitter days we would put a ha'penny coin in one of the payout trays. Of course he saw it, and went through the exact same procedure, even though the coin was worth much less. It was comical to watch and it did give us a laugh at the time.

I never saw this tramp in any of the other amusement arcades in town. Was he happy enough just to hang around Marine, which was the largest arcade in town? Or had he been thrown out of all the others? I never saw him get thrown out of Marine by any of the attendants.

This tramp repeated the same manoeuvres for the next three summer seasons, after that I never saw him again. I still wonder today what happened to him. Did he pass away, or simply move away to another area? But I for one will never forget that 1960s tramp.

More 1960s memories month.

***Robert Rowland***

# Small World!

By Richard Waring

About 10 or 15 years ago (I can't remember exactly) I purchased a load of old Coin Slot Magazines. I was hoping there would be some articles on one arm bandits or maybe video games which I was interested in back then. After looking through the magazines and not really finding too much of interest (mainly 'newer' fruit machines) I decided I would just keep the odd article and dump the rest. I ended up with four or five items of interest and filed them away somewhere.

Anyway, I had forgotten all about these cuttings until a couple of weeks ago when they reappeared during a clear out. When I saw the one featuring Jeremy, who I had not met at that time, I remember I had saved the article due to it being Leicestershire based and also I intended to go over and look at the collection of machines some time.

I never did get around to going over to the Fox Inn, which I think is now being demolished. One question still remains though – what happened to the Dalek?

*Richard Waring*



● Jeremy Clapham.

**Exterminate!  
Exterminate!**

DRINKERS at a Leicestershire pub risk extermination if they fail to leave at closing time.

Licensee Jeremy Clapham has bought a genuine Dalek from the cult science fiction television show DrWho.

The Dalek was once the property of entertainer Roy Castle but is now the centre of attention at The Fox Inn at Thringstone, near Loughborough.

The pub already contains 15 antique fruit machines, a bumper car and a coffin from a ghost train. Clapham's wife Susan describes her husband as "completely batty".

A black Dalek similar to Clapham's was recently valued at £24,000, but Clapham refuses to state how much he paid for this piece of television history.

Clapham says that he bought the Dalek from the former drummer in Alvin Stardust's band.



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### **For Sale**

Jamieson Skill Poker, circa 1975. Sold as not working. Lights up but game play not correct. Control board is 7400 series TTL logic chips, so a background in electronics may be needed to fix. Would like it to go to someone who has a chance of fixing it. Open to offers.

Tim 0161 718 1643 (South Manchester)  
srich61582@ntlworld.com

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### **Wanted**

Conveyor wall machine, must be in very good working order. Original or repro by Powells.

Peter@merrivalemodelvillage.co.uk  
01493 842097 day  
01603 783270 eve

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### **Wanted**

Complete ball lift mech. and correct coin slide assembly for Rock-Ola Worlds' Fair Jigsaw Pinball. Alternatively, if anyone could let me have a look at one or supply a sketch or photos I would be grateful.

Alan 01582 536356

### **For Sale**

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All in excellent condition, house move, downsize, forces sale.

Tom 01603 722328 (Norfolk)

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### **Working Models Wanted**

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peter@merrivalemodelvillage.co.uk  
01493 842097 day  
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p.brown32@btinternet.com

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Edward 01507 477921

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Roger 07771 625155 (Norfolk)

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### **For Sale**

Mutoscope and allwin spares, surplus to  
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John 01273 608620 (Brighton)

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### **Wanted**

Early slot machines, any condition but  
must be complete. Good price paid.

Dave 01580 240834 (Kent)

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### **Wanted**

Issue 14 of  
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Dave. 07852791716. (Lowestoft)

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### **Wanted**

Brenco machines – anything considered.

Russell 07966121006 (Nottingham)

### **For Sale**

Nostalgic Machines Punch & Judy coin-  
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cup has become detached from the  
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yourself a bargain at £200.

Jerry 07710 285360

Jerry.mmm@tiscali.co.uk

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### **Wanted**

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condition. Prefer original, although any  
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Robert 07968 740622

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### **Wanted**

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Alan 0151 645 0347 (Merseyside)

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Pete 01493 369938 (Norfolk)

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### **Wanted**

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Paul 01278 782714 (Somerset)

Paul.vickers@hotmail.co.uk



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by Nic Costa

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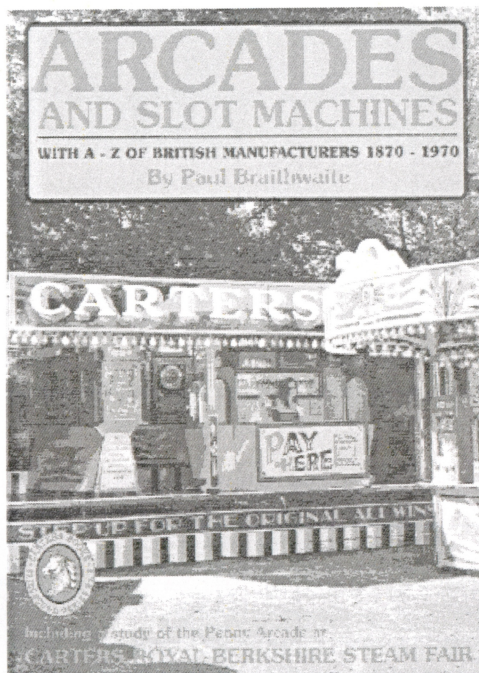




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by Paul Braithwaite

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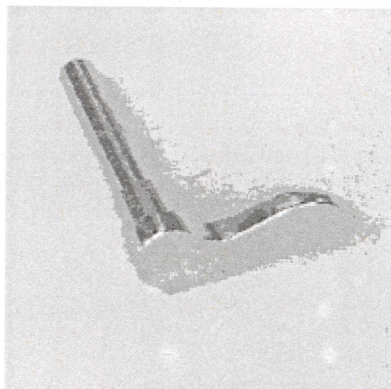
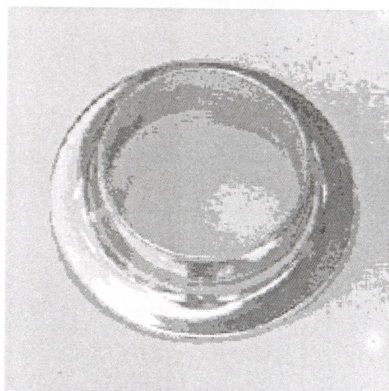
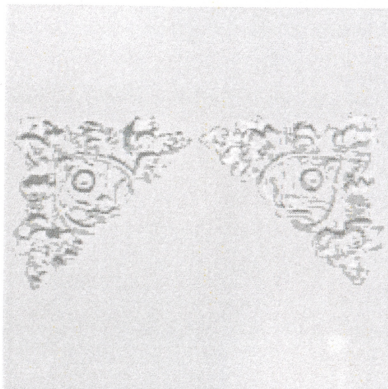
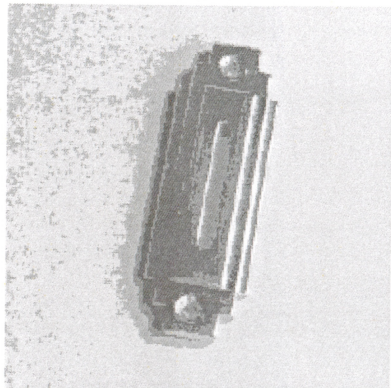
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